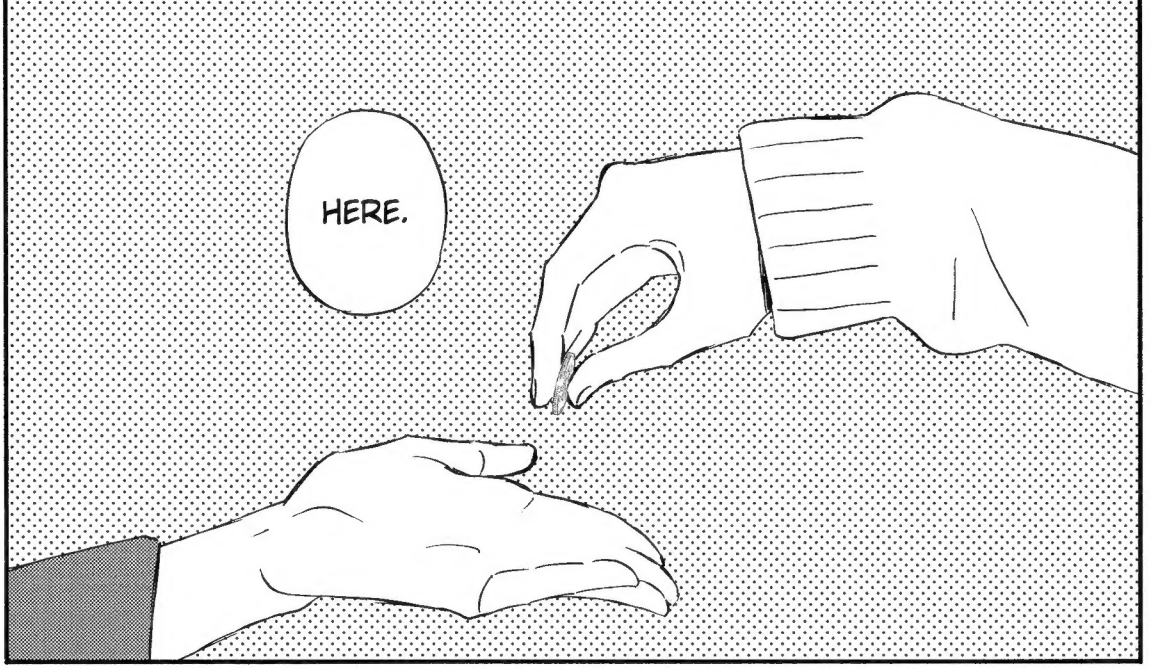
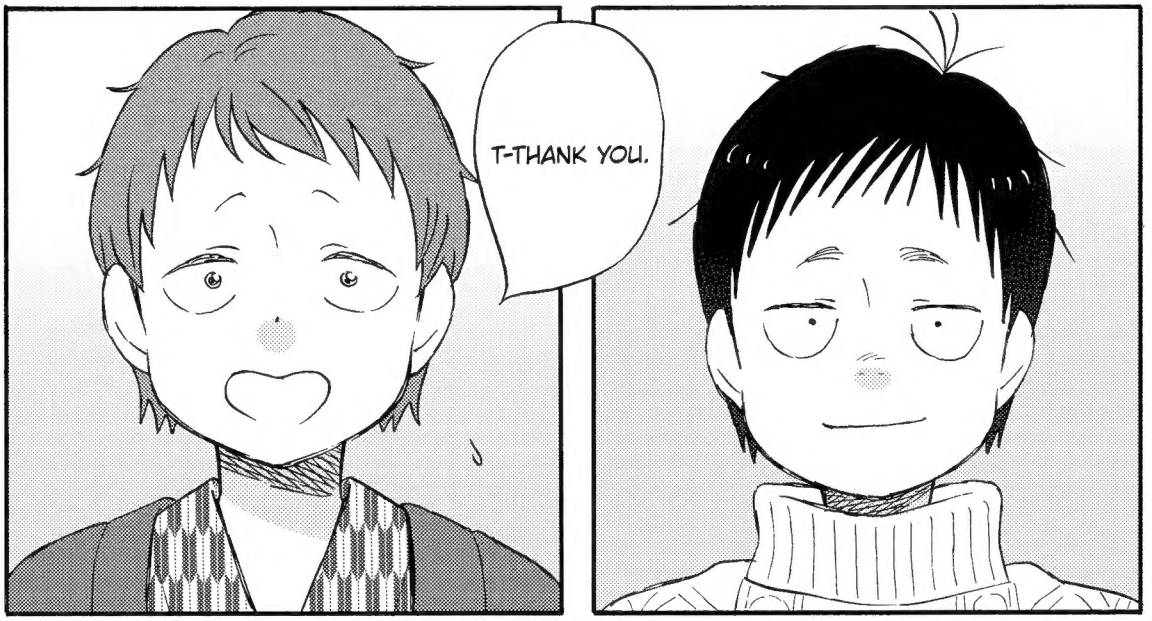

HERE.

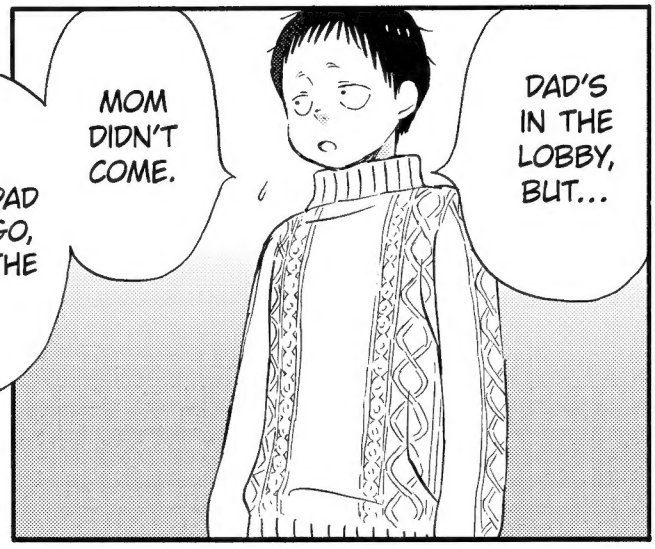

T-THANK YOU.

HMM...
I'VE NEVER BEEN TO A HOT SPRING INN BEFORE. SO I WANTED TO EXPLORE A LITTLE.
HUH? YEAH. MY PARENTS STAYED IN THEIR ROOM, BUT...
...ARE YOU BY YOURSELF?

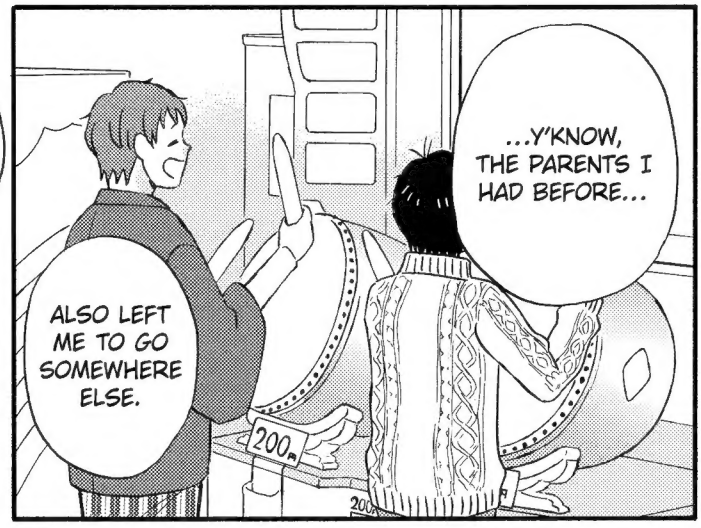
WHAT ABOUT YOUR PARENTS?
...

WANNA PLAY WITH ME?
HUH?! CAN I?

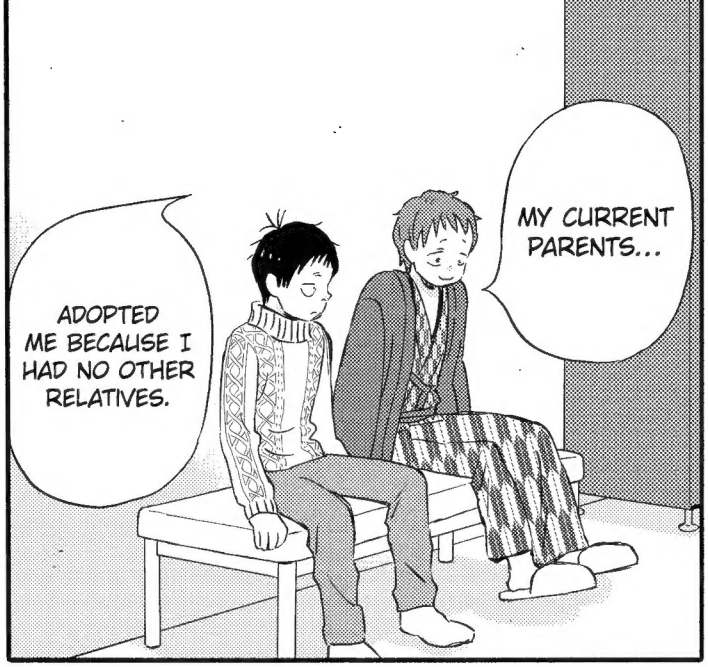
SHE DIVORCED DAD A WHILE AGO, AND LEFT THE HOUSE.


MOM DIDN'T COME.
DAD'S IN THE LOBBY, BUT...

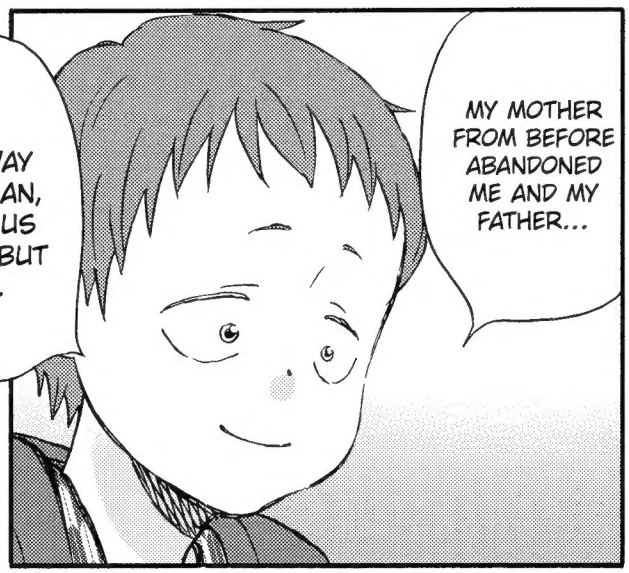
REALLY?
YEAH.

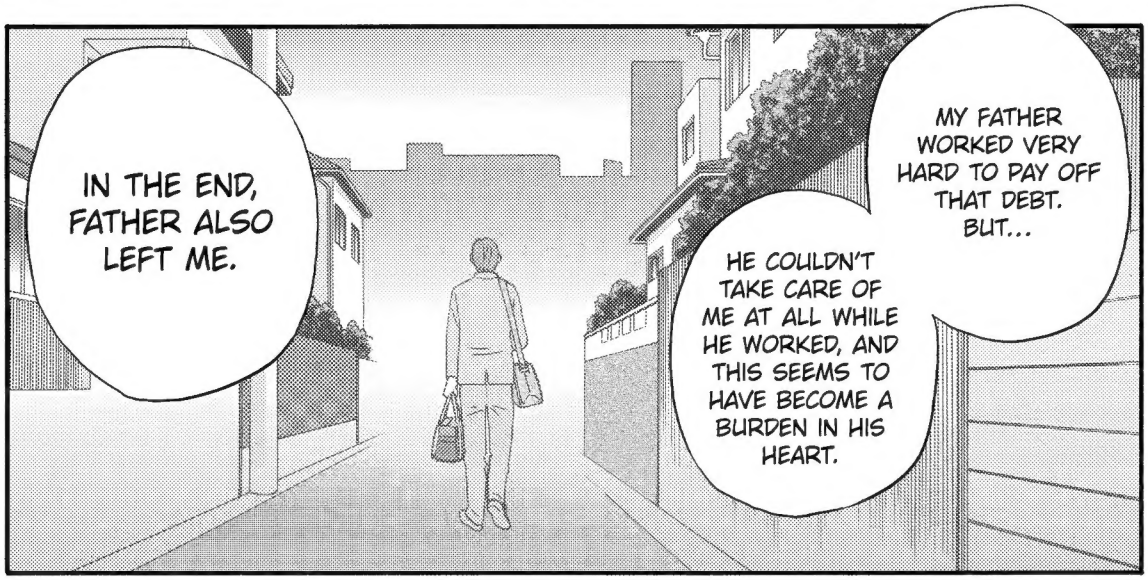

...Y'KNOW, THE PARENTS I HAD BEFORE...
ALSO LEFT ME TO GO SOMEWHERE ELSE.
200円

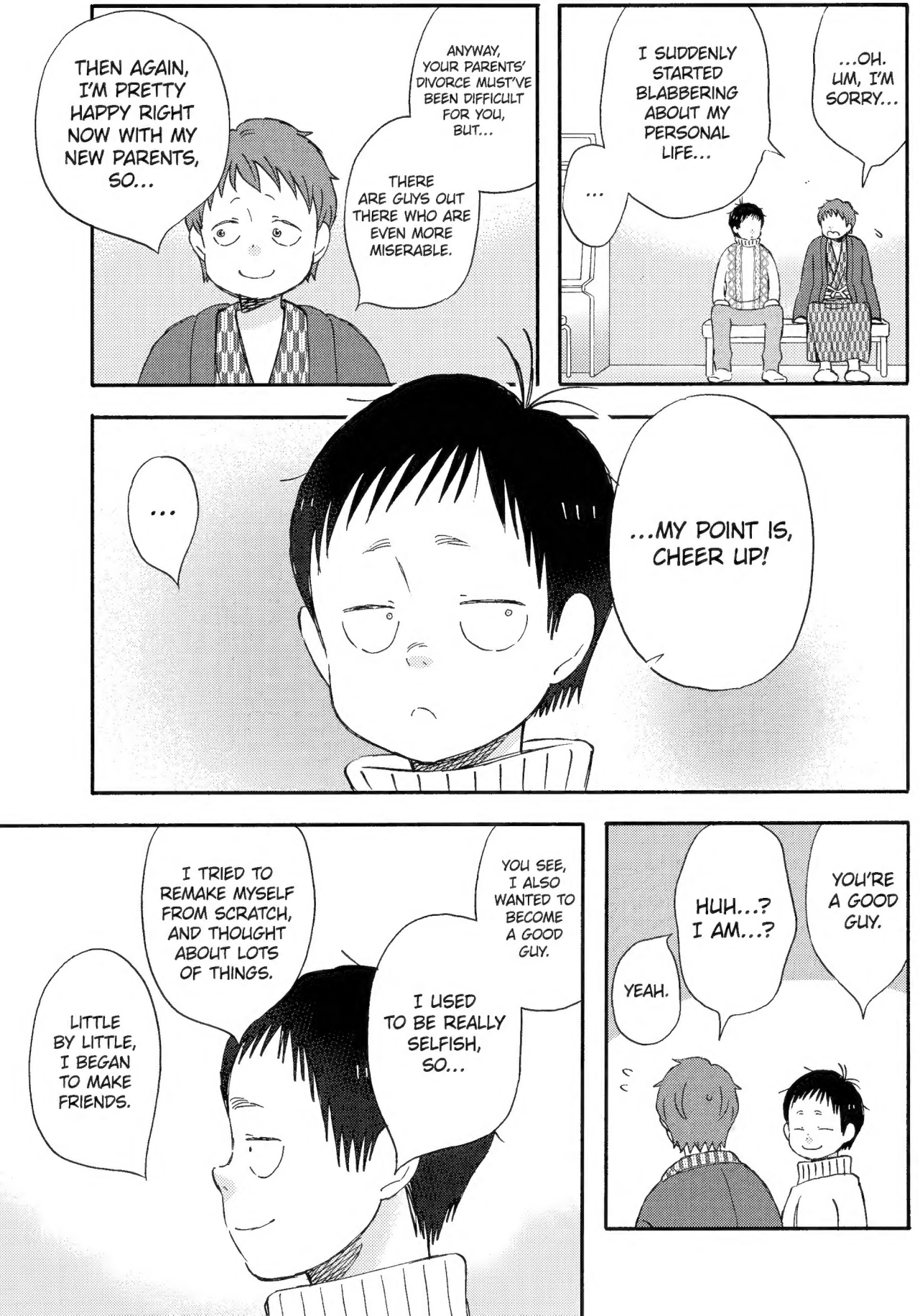
Damn. Your life hasn't been easy, huh?
I guess not...


MY CURRENT PARENTS...
ADOPTED ME BECAUSE I HAD NO OTHER RELATIVES.

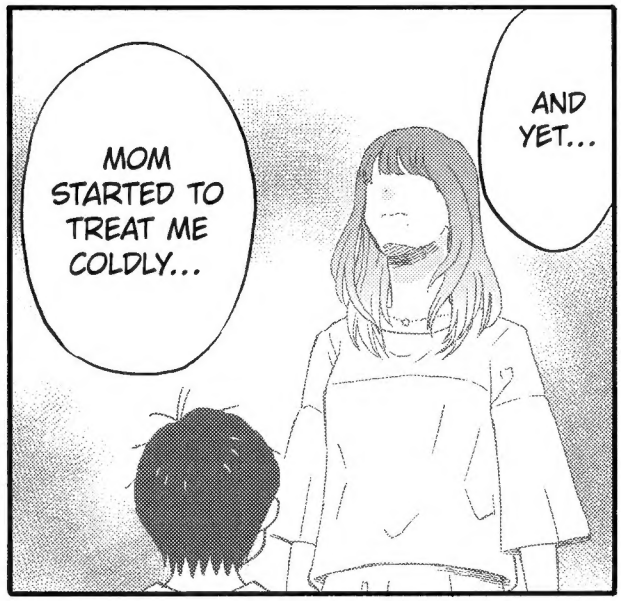
AND RAN AWAY WITH A MAN, LEAVING US NOTHING BUT DEBT...


MY MOTHER FROM BEFORE ABANDONED ME AND MY FATHER...

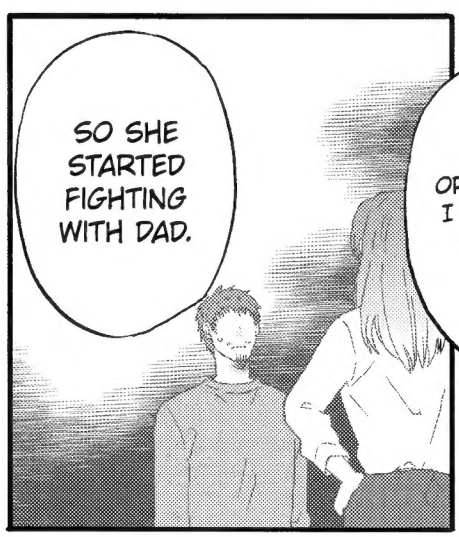

MY FATHER WORKED VERY HARD TO PAY OFF THAT DEBT. BUT...
HE COULDN'T TAKE CARE OF ME AT ALL WHILE HE WORKED, AND THIS SEEMS TO HAVE BECOME A BURDEN IN HIS HEART.
IN THE END, FATHER ALSO LEFT ME.

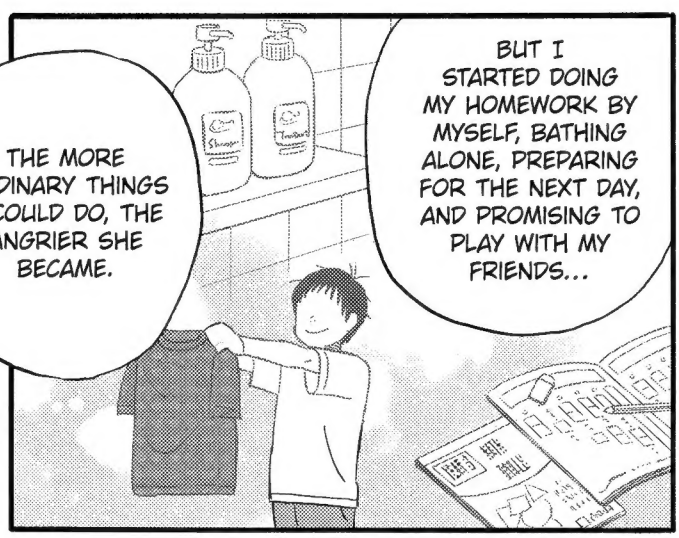

THEN AGAIN, I'M PRETTY HAPPY RIGHT NOW WITH MY NEW PARENTS, SO...
ANYWAY, YOUR PARENTS' DIVORCE MUST'VE BEEN DIFFICULT FOR YOU, BUT...
THERE ARE GUYS OUT THERE WHO ARE EVEN MORE MISERABLE.
I SUDDENLY STARTED BLABBERING ABOUT MY PERSONAL LIFE...
...
...OH. UM, I'M SORRY...
...
...MY POINT IS, CHEER UP!
I TRIED TO REMAKE MYSELF FROM SCRATCH, AND THOUGHT ABOUT LOTS OF THINGS.
LITTLE BY LITTLE, I BEGAN TO MAKE FRIENDS.
YOU SEE, I ALSO WANTED TO BECOME A GOOD GUY.
I USED TO BE REALLY SELFISH, SO...
HUH...? I AM...?
YOU'RE A GOOD GUY.
YEAH.

WOULDN'T SHE BE HAPPY IF HER SON MADE FRIENDS?
HM? WHY DID THAT HAPPEN?
YEAH... I THOUGHT SO, TOO.

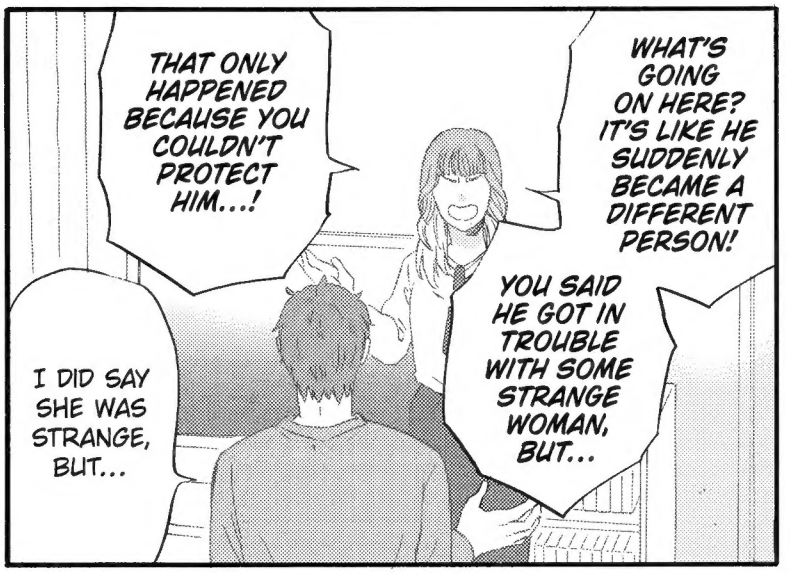

MOM STARTED TO TREAT ME COLDLY...
AND YET...

SHE WANTED TO LOOK AFTER ME AND TO WORK HARD TO RAISE HER SELFISH AND TROUBLESOME SON...
THAT'S WHAT IT FELT LIKE.
BUT MY MOTHER...


SO SHE STARTED FIGHTING WITH DAD.

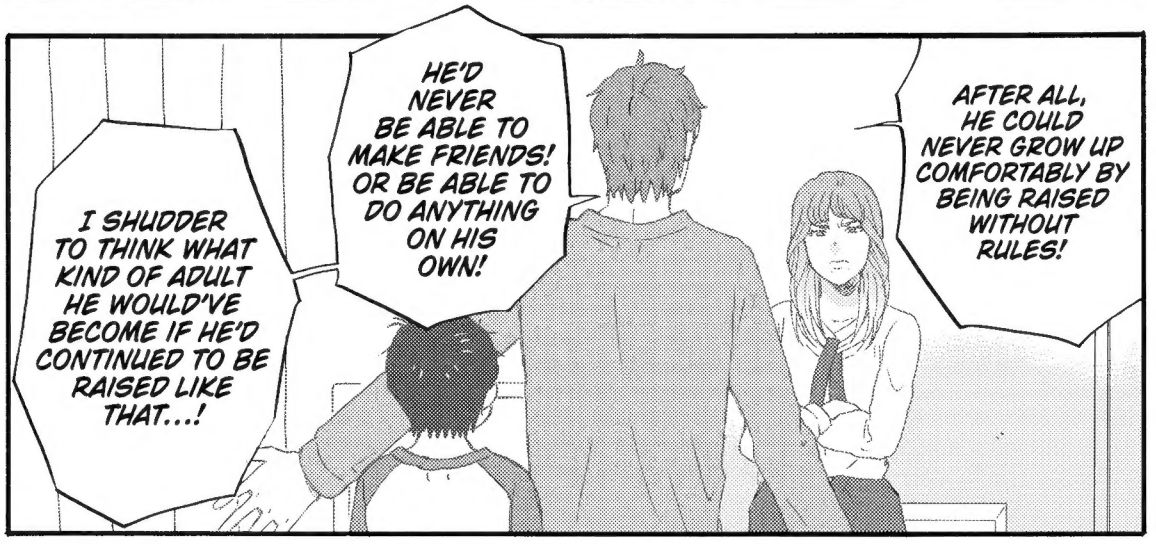

THE MORE ORDINARY THINGS I COULD DO, THE ANGRIER SHE BECAME.
BUT I STARTED DOING MY HOMEWORK BY MYSELF, BATHING ALONE, PREPARING FOR THE NEXT DAY, AND PROMISING TO PLAY WITH MY FRIENDS...

I DON'T THINK SHE WAS WRONG.
KEISUKE'S CHANGE IS PROOF OF THAT.


THAT ONLY HAPPENED BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T PROTECT HIM...!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? IT'S LIKE HE SUDDENLY BECAME A DIFFERENT PERSON!
YOU SAID HE GOT IN TROUBLE WITH SOME STRANGE WOMAN, BUT...
I DID SAY SHE WAS STRANGE, BUT...

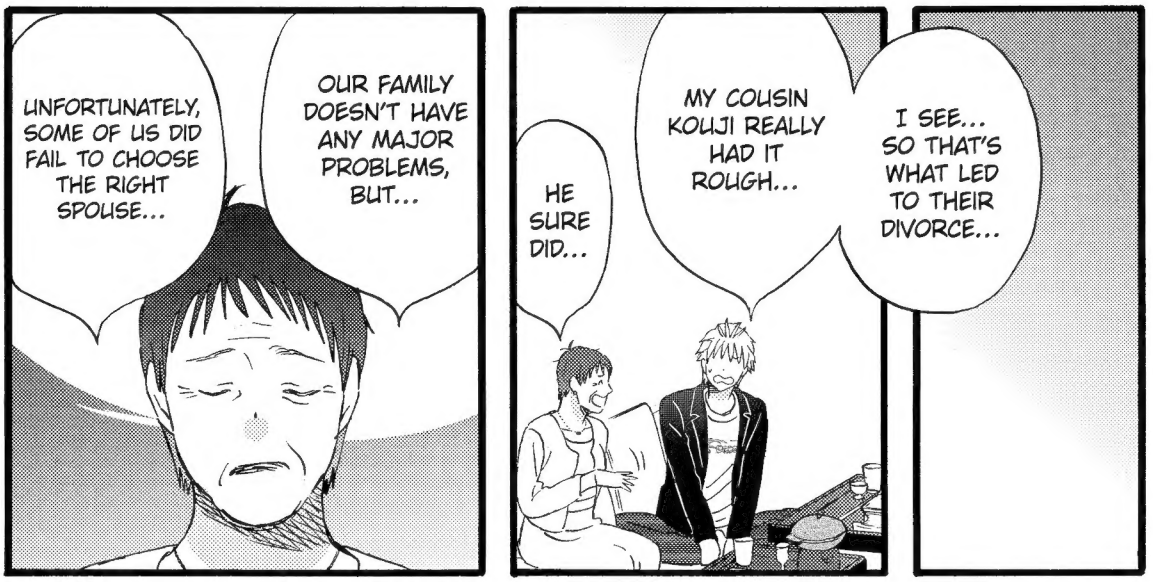
BUT I JUST WANT KEISUKE TO GROW AT HIS OWN, COMFORTABLE PACE...!
...BUT I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT IT WAS STRANGE...

HE HAS GROWN UP! HE'S MADE FRIENDS AND I STOPPED GETTING CALLS FROM HIS SCHOOL!
WHY CAN'T YOU BE HAPPY FOR HIM?

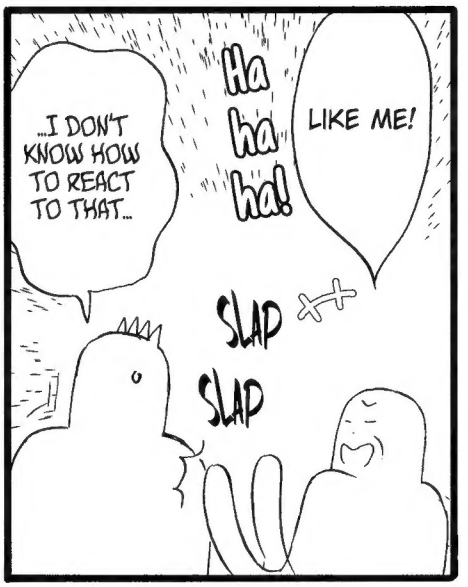

AFTER ALL, HE COULD NEVER GROW UP COMFORTABLY BY BEING RAISED WITHOUT RULES!
HE'D NEVER BE ABLE TO MAKE FRIENDS! OR BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING ON HIS OWN!
I SHUDDER TO THINK WHAT KIND OF ADULT HE WOULD'VE BECOME IF HE'D CONTINUED TO BE RAISED LIKE THAT...!

HALFWAY THROUGH THOSE FIGHTS, I'D STOP UNDERSTANDING WHAT MY MOTHER WAS SAYING. IT WAS SCARY.
IT FELT LIKE SHE WAS TALKING IN AN ALIEN LANGUAGE.
YOU "ALWAYS" THOUGHT IT WAS STRANGE ...?!

...
...BUT I GUESS IT DIDN'T QUITE WORK OUT...
I JUST WANTED TO BECOME A GOOD GUY, YOU KNOW?

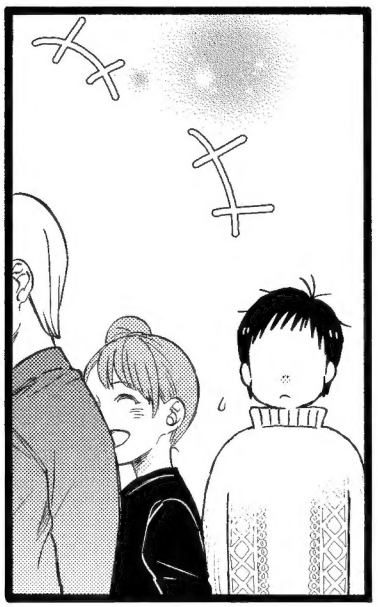

UNFORTUNATELY, SOME OF US DID FAIL TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT SPOUSE...
OUR FAMILY DOESN'T HAVE ANY MAJOR PROBLEMS, BUT...
HE SURE DID...
MY COUSIN KOUJI REALLY HAD IT ROUGH...
I SEE... SO THAT'S WHAT LED TO THEIR DIVORCE...

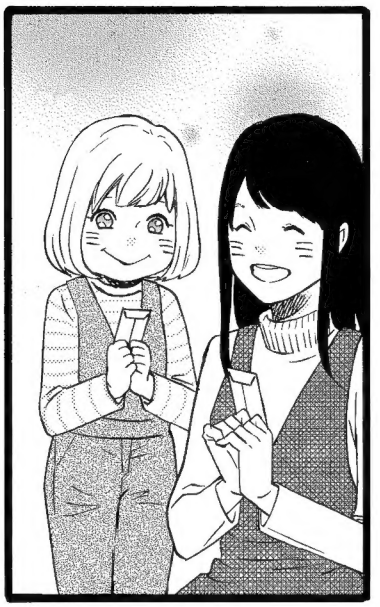
...

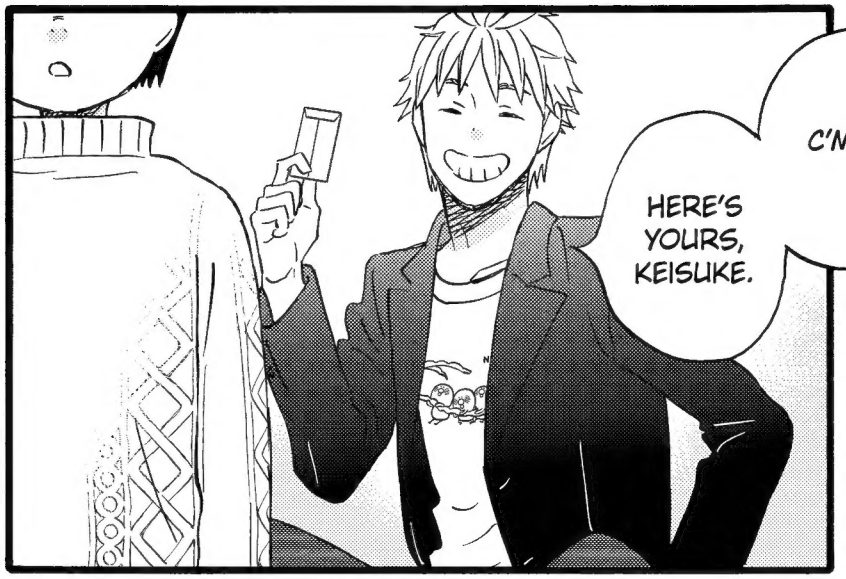

...I DON'T KNOW HOW TO REACT TO THAT...
Ha ha ha!
LIKE ME!
SLAP
SLAP

HEY, GUYS!
Step

ALL RIGHT!
IT'S TIME FOR NEW YEAR'S MONEY!
YAAAAY!

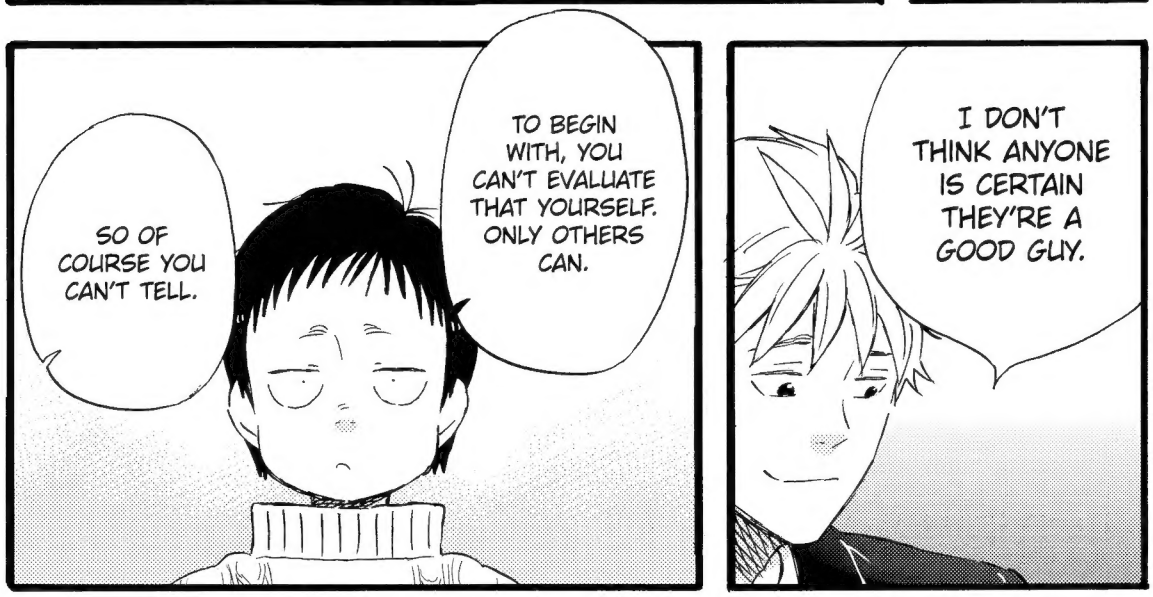




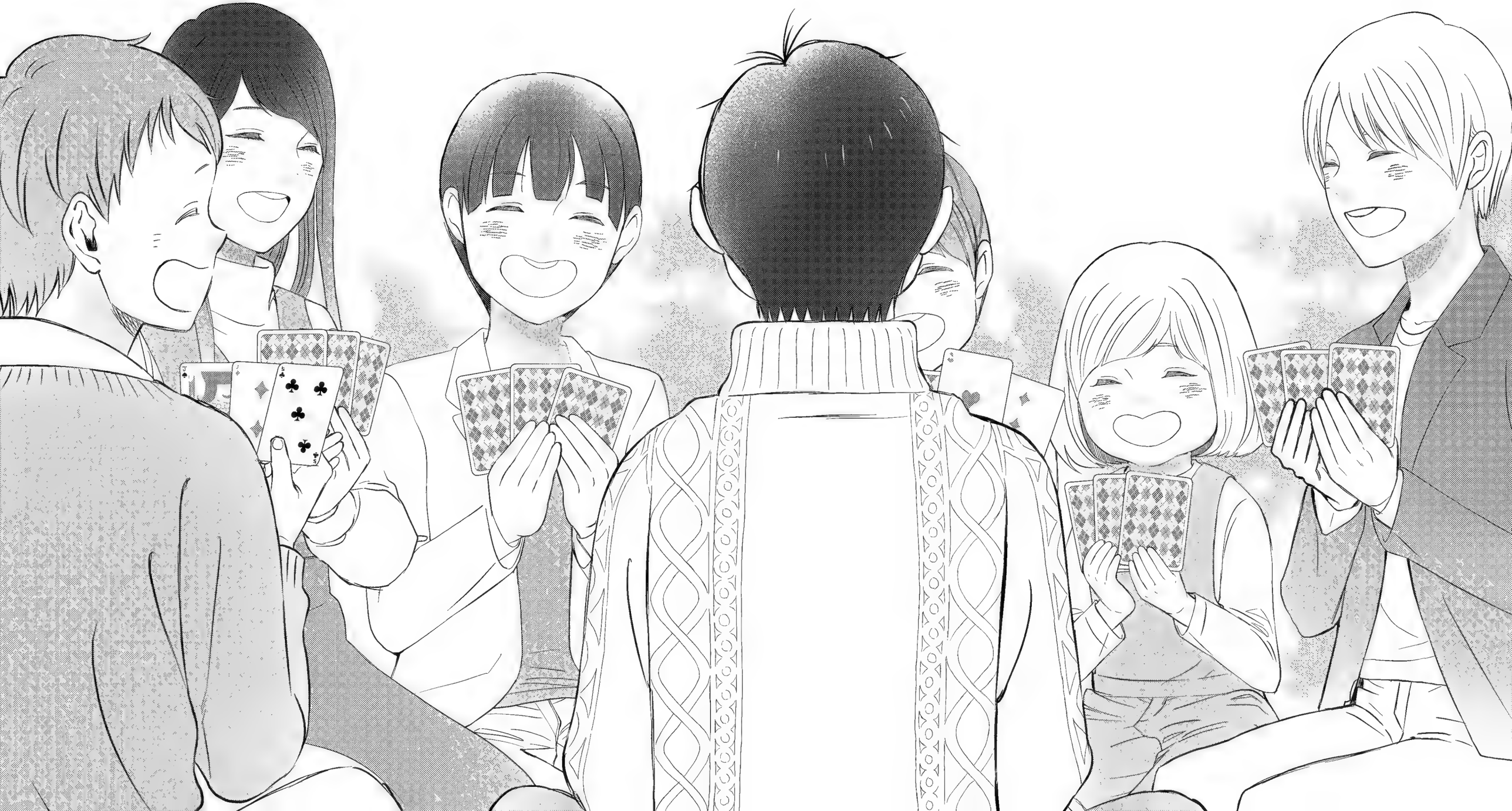

HERE'S YOURS, KEISUKE.
C'MON!

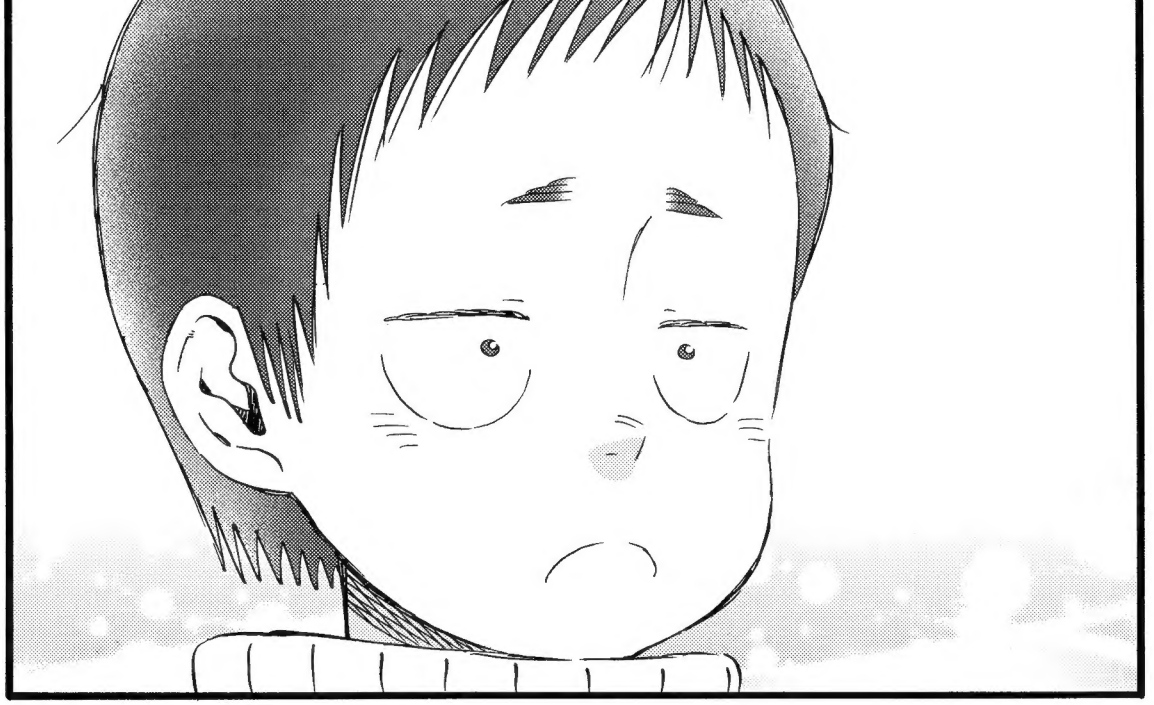
...
"GIVE THIS TO KEISUKE IF HE'S BECOME A GOOD GUY." THAT'S WHAT SHE TOLD ME.
AI-SAN SAID TO GIVE YOU NEW YEAR'S MONEY.
WHAT...?

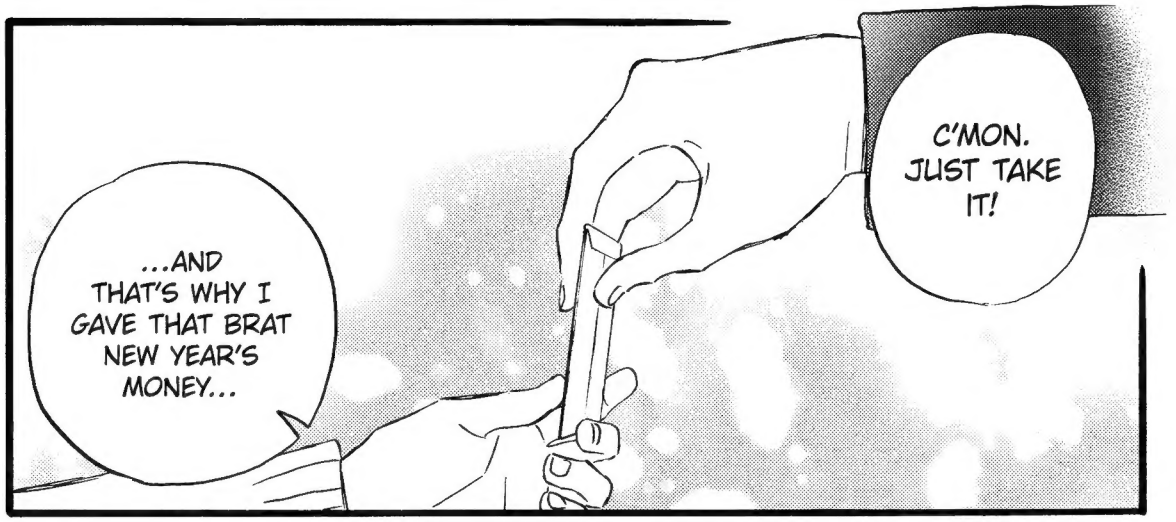
...
HOW CAN YOU BE SURE I'VE BECOME A GOOD GUY?
I MEAN, I CAN'T EVEN TELL MYSELF IF I DID...
BUT...

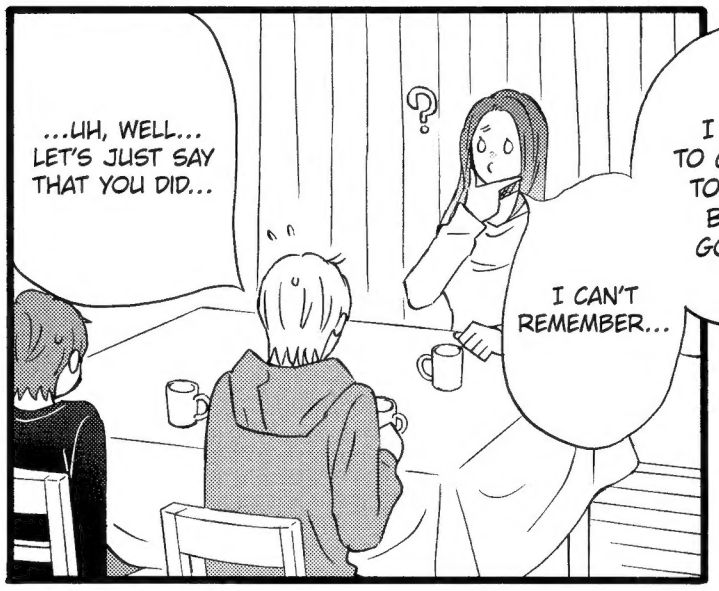

TO BEGIN WITH, YOU CAN'T EVALUATE THAT YOURSELF. ONLY OTHERS CAN.
SO OF COURSE YOU CAN'T TELL.
I DON'T THINK ANYONE IS CERTAIN THEY'RE A GOOD GUY.

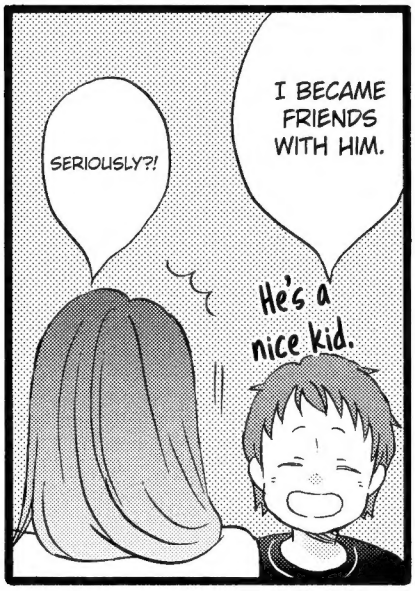
YOU MUST PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE FACES OF THOSE AROUND THEM.
THAT'S WHY, TO DETERMINE WHETHER SOMEONE IS A GOOD OR BAD GUY...

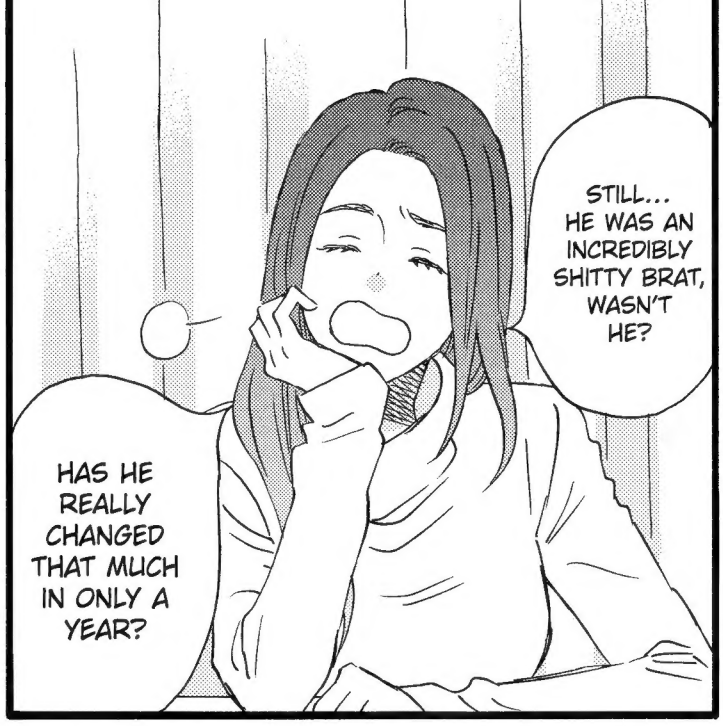




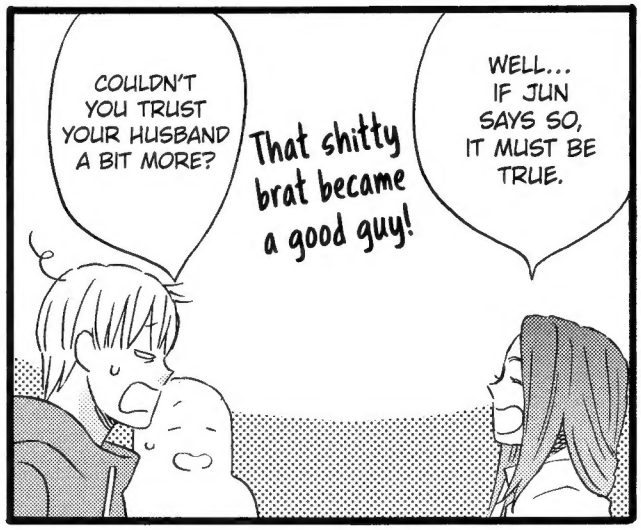

C'MON. JUST TAKE IT!
...AND THAT'S WHY I GAVE THAT BRAT NEW YEAR'S MONEY...


...UH, WELL... LET'S JUST SAY THAT YOU DID...
?
...DID I ASK YOU TO GIVE MONEY TO HIM IF HE BECAME A GOOD GUY?
I CAN'T REMEMBER...

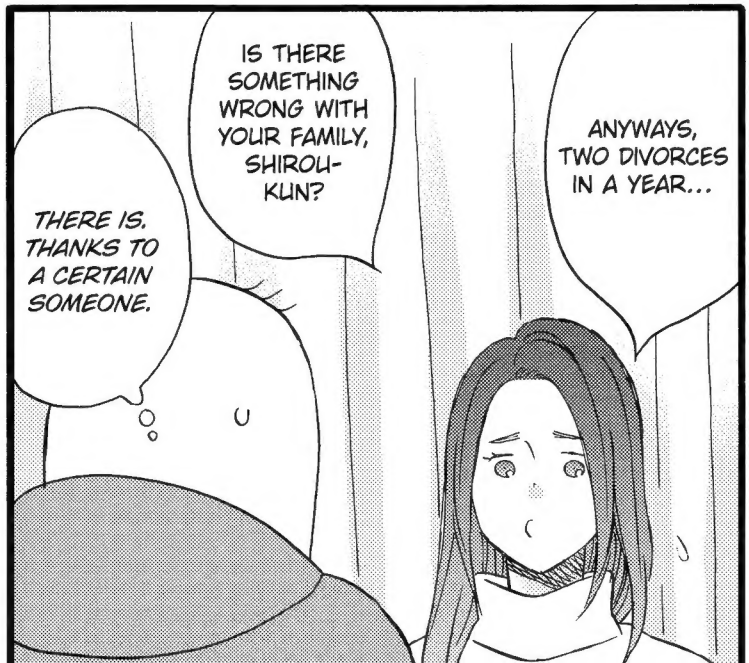

I BECAME FRIENDS WITH HIM.
SERIOUSLY?!
He's a nice kid.

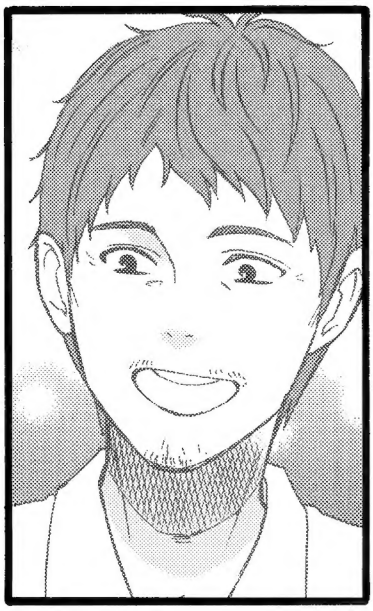

STILL... HE WAS AN INCREDIBLY SHITTY BRAT, WASN'T HE?
HAS HE REALLY CHANGED THAT MUCH IN ONLY A YEAR?

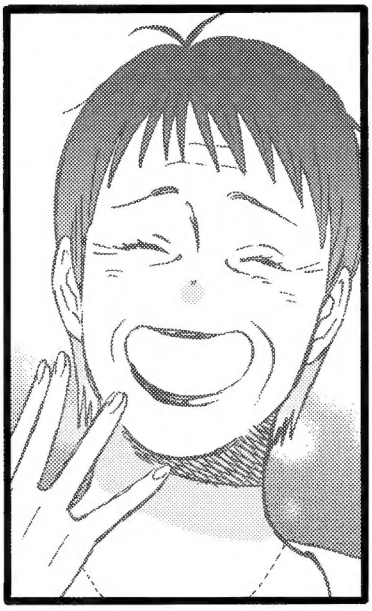
I'm kidding! That was a joke.
Grrr...
Bwa ha ha!

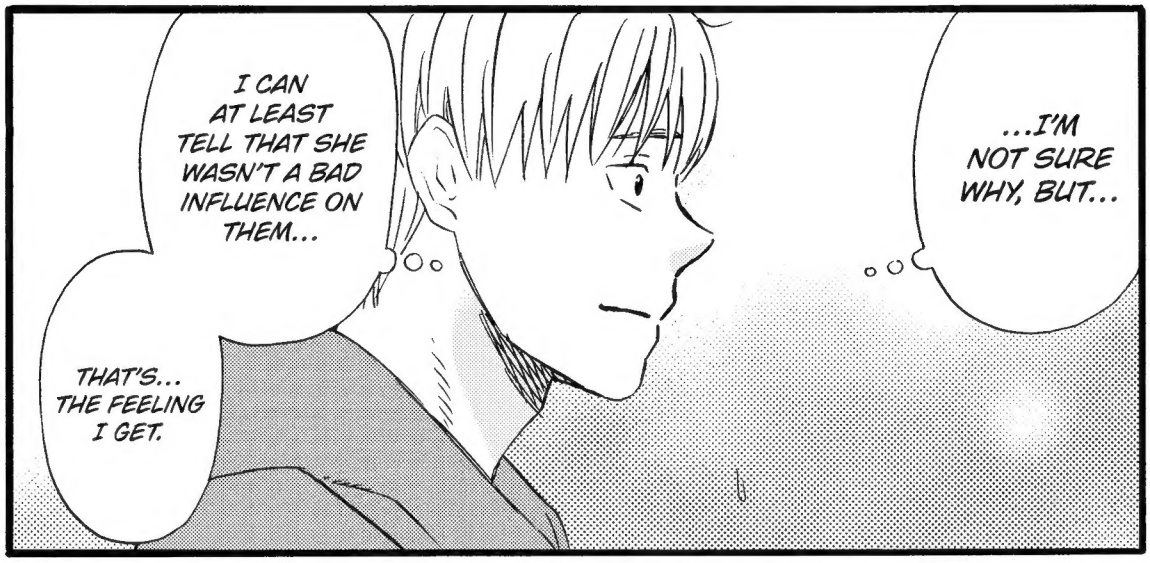

COULDN'T YOU TRUST YOUR HUSBAND A BIT MORE?
That shitty brat became a good guy!
WELL... IF JUN SAYS SO, IT MUST BE TRUE.

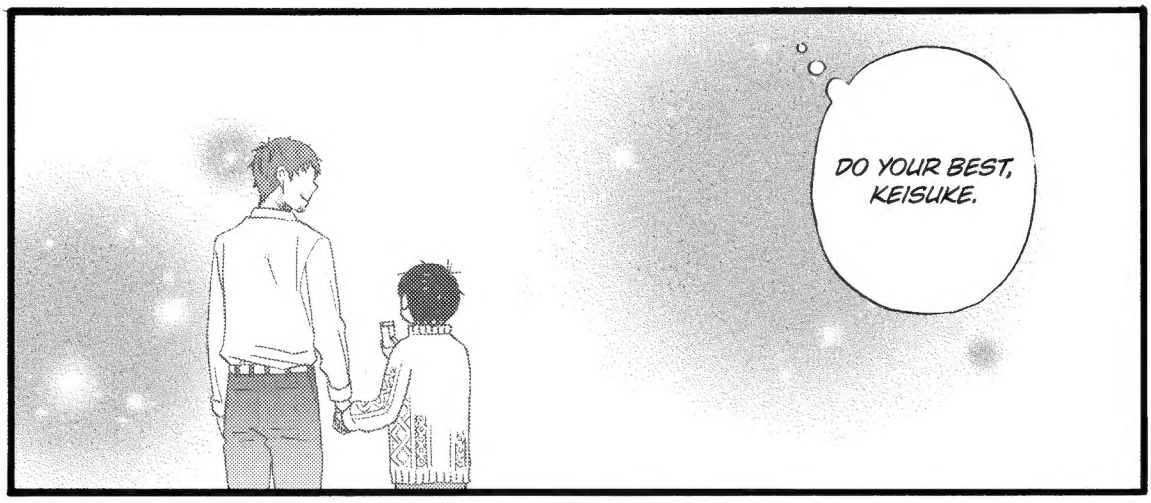
...BUT WELL...


IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOUR FAMILY, SHIROU-KUN?
ANYWAYS, TWO DIVORCES IN A YEAR...
THERE IS. THANKS TO A CERTAIN SOMEONE.






I CAN AT LEAST TELL THAT SHE WASN'T A BAD INFLUENCE ON THEM...
...I'M NOT SURE WHY, BUT...
THAT'S... THE FEELING I GET.


DO YOUR BEST, KEISUKE.